

Through the Ionian- May / June 2008
Corfu, Lefkas, Paxos, Kalamos, Ithaka, Keffalonia,
Corinth Canal and Athens.

Part Two

It is 18:00 hrs. and still 38 C. I am at my cockpit desk wearing my swimsuit! It's a dry heat but even so... We are on the island of Aegina, not too far from Athens. Tied up in the bustling harbour- feeling small beside a 62 ft. Oyster luxury yacht. Ferries and hydrofoils disgorge pale tourists from the city and we feel, yes, a bit smug. A busy and very pretty little place. Small streets of shops full of high quality, hand-made Greek jewellery and brightly-coloured clothes. Lively tavernas line the quay. The Greek women are stylish, very well-dressed and polished. We are clearly totally out of our league. Obviously boat bums I'm afraid. Part of a different community. But we are getting to like it and they are getting to know us. We are slowing down with the relentless heat- 39C. There is a reason that everything shuts down between 14:00 and 18:00!

The food is simple but good- roast lamb, grilled fish, big salads of fresh feta, tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers and onion dressed with good local olive oil and lemon, fresh home-made bread, yoghurt, honey and nuts. We spend hours watching the ever changing light on the constant backdrop of mountains- soft and hazy early on, then harsher but golden to purple in the evening. We often don't eat before 21:00 when it cools off and the townsfolk begin their evening stroll along the quay. Every day the water boat delivers the water supply for the island. But it's not drinkable-for washing only. We are thankful that we make our own though rationing is sometimes necessary if we stay in port too long.



We explore the small back streets, hire a scooter now and then if we're feeling ambitious, eat out once in awhile, order iced coffee in the café, read English newspapers, do a few chores ...lazy times....Here are a few of our favourite photos....

One of the most unique experiences was a 2 day drive through the once isolated mountains just 50 km. from the Albanian border, to the Monasteries of Meteora- a very weird place. Originally 24 monasteries were built hundreds of years ago on the 300 mt. stone pinnacles created by centuries of erosion. To be closer to God and to illustrate the hardship and isolation they were prepared to endure. Today, just 6 remain. 3 are inhabited by monks and 2 by Nuns. For hundreds of years, the only access was by being hoisted up in a rope basket. We climbed hundreds of stone steps through the clouds to reach these amazing small “worlds”- peaceful and lovely and, of course, with heavenly views! We spent the night in a small hotel right at the base of the rock formations. Once remote, the mountains have now been made accessible with a new motorway and immense bridges courtesy of the EU. Yet it still seems wild and apart. This region suffered heavy fighting during WWII and the Greek civil war and many small villages feature statues dedicated to local partisan heroes. It is also famous for large sheep and goat herds which we saw along the way. Greece, home of democracy , has itself been occupied by many conquering forces through the ages. They are an extremely proud, independent and gracious people.



We're drifting slowly down through the Saronic Islands, south of Athens. Poros, then Hydra and Spetses –small resort islands- before returning to Athens on July 09 to pick up Lene and Jan, for a 2 week sail. We are really looking forward to sharing the colour, the light, the mountains, the blue of the sea, and the people with them.



More news soon....